

State tax credit helps small businesses create jobs Break encourages employers to push button on hires

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Pawel Witkowski is excited about his new job as a design consultant, and handled with aplomb his appearance at a news conference Monday to explain that the job came with a tax credit for small businesses.

Witkowski's employer, Wilmette-based de Giulio Kitchen Design, employs 45, so it was eligible to take advantage of the Illinois Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit. The \$2,500 tax credit applies to businesses with 50 or fewer employees that create new, full-time positions and retain the positions for one year. The positions must pay no less than \$13.75 an hour or the equivalent, with a minimum \$25,025 annual salary.

Tax-credit certificates will be awarded starting July 1, 2011. Details can be found at JobsTaxCredit.illinois.gov.

The state tax credit complements a federal tax credit of up to \$1,000 per new hire.

"It won't pay a full salary, but it encourages companies to go ahead with a hire they might be considering," said Peggy Wilson, chief financial officer for de Giulio, which employs eight at its design studio in the Merchandise Mart.

"The only way to grow is to hire a new design consultant," she said.

Hedy Ratner, co-president and co-founder of the Women's Business Development Center, said more than half of the 500,000 small businesses statewide are run by women and minorities.

"We are all struggling," she said. "It makes a major impact if we can find ways to support and strengthen these businesses."

De Giulio Kitchen Design, founded by renowned designer Mick De Giulio 26 years ago, is publishing its first book this fall, Kitchen Centric, which shares De Giulio's philosophies and favorite projects.